

Article - Family Law

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§5–3B–15.

(a) Subsection (b) of this section does not apply to an adoption by a spouse of the prospective adoptee’s parent or a relative of the prospective adoptee.

(b) A court shall issue a show–cause order that includes advice as to the parent’s rights to:

- (1) have independent counsel; and
- (2) receive adoption counseling and guidance.

(c) On issuance of a show–cause order as to a prospective adoptee, a petitioner shall serve the order:

(1) on each of the prospective adoptee’s living parents who has not consented to the adoption; and

(2) if the prospective adoptee is at least 10 years old and has not consented to the adoption, on the prospective adoptee.

(d) Service under this section shall be by:

- (1) personal service; or
- (2) certified mail, restricted delivery, return receipt requested.

(e) Service under this section shall be attempted at the parent’s last address known to the petitioner.

(f) (1) If a court is satisfied, by affidavit or testimony, that, after reasonable efforts in good faith, a petitioner could not identify a parent or could not effect service on a parent, the court shall order service through notice by publication as to that parent.

(2) Notice under this subsection shall consist of substantially the following statement:

To: (Father’s name) To: (Mother’s name) To: Unknown parent “You are hereby notified that an adoption case has been filed in the circuit court for (county name),

case no. (number). All persons who believe themselves to be parents of a (male or female) child born on (date of birth) in (city, state) to (mother's and father's names and dates of birth) shall file a written response. A copy of the show-cause order may be obtained from the clerk's office at (address) and (telephone number). If you do not file a written objection by (deadline), you will have agreed to the permanent loss of your parental rights to this child."

(3) Service under this subsection shall be by:

(i) publication at least once in one or more newspapers in general circulation in the county where the petition is filed or, if different, where the parent's last address known to the petitioner is located; and

(ii) posting for at least 30 days on a website of the Department.

(4) The Department may charge a petitioner a reasonable fee to cover the cost of posting.

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